

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAM-01 DRC-01 AEC-11 DLOS-06

COA-02 SCI-06 ACDA-19 IO-14 AECE-00 EPA-04 CEQ-02

/143 W

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O 270930Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 245

INFO AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE

SECDEG WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CNO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII IMMEDIATE

CINCPACFLT MAKALAPA, HAWAII IMMEDIATE

COMSUBSPAC PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII IMMEDIATE

COMUSJAPAN FUCHU JAPAN IMMEDIATE

COMSEVENTHFLT YOKSUKA JAPAN IMMEDIATE

COMNAVOFORJAPAN YOKSUKA, JAPAN IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: MARR TECH JA

SUBJECT: ALLEGED RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION FROM SSN'S

REF: A. TOKYO 12358 DTG 161020Z NOV 72

B. STATE 212442 DTG 221740Z NOV 72

C. STATE 117988 DTG 161647Z JUN 73

1. IN DIET UPPER HOUSE AUDIT COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 25 JCP MEMBER

SUSMU KATO INTERPELLATED STA ATOMIC ENERGY BUREAU DEPTY DIRGEN

YOSHINORI IHARA CONCERNING ALLEGED "(HIGH" RATE OF COBALT 60

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INDICATED IN 1972 SEDIMENT SAMPLE FROM NAHA PORT AND SHELLFISH

SAMPLE FROM WHITE BEACH (REF A). JAPANESE PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE PLAY TO EXCHANGE WHICH FOLLOWS:

QUOTE KATO: RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF RADIOACTIVE NUCLIDES IN SEA BOTTOM MUD FROM OKINAWA CONDUCTED MAY 22, 1972 BY THE JACRI...SHOWED AN ABNORMALLY HIGH RATE OF COBALT 60, THAT IS, THE MAXIMUM OF 178 PICOCURIES OF COBALT 60 PER KILOGRAM, WAS DETECTED. IS THIS DUE TO FALLOUT (DEATH ASH) OR FROM SSN'S?

IHARA: A PART OF THE "HIGH RATE" OF COBALT 60 WHICH WAS DETECTED FROM THE SAMPLES OF SEA BOTTOM MUD FROM OKINAWA IN THE SURVEYS CONDUCTED (AT THAT TIME) OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER REVERSION IS ASSUMED TO BE DUE TO SSN'S... THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES THAT A PART OF IT IS RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT AND ANOTHER PART IS IRON, BUT SOME PARTS OF IT ARE ASSUMED TO BE DUE TO SSN'S... THE FIGURE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE DUE TO FALLOUT ALONE. UNQUOTE

ALTHOUGH NOTING IHARA'S ASSERTIONS THAT SUCH LEVELS OF RADIATION CONSTITUTED NO DANGER TO HUMANS, PRESS GAVE HEADLINE COVERAGE TO FACT IHARA'S RESPONSES CONSTITUTE FIRST TIME GOJ OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN HAS ATTRIBUTED ANY RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION IN JAPANESE PORTS TO SSN'S.

2. IN MORNING FEBRUARY 26 POL/MIL COUNSELOR CONTACTED CHIEF, SECURITY DIVISION YAMASHITA TO EXPRESS OUR DISMAY GOJ OFFICIAL WOULD MAKE AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENT IN DIET THAT SSN RADIATION POLLUTION WAS PERMISSABLE INFERENCE FROM DATA PRODUCED BY 1972 SAMPLE EVALUATION. POL/MIL COUNSELOR REQUESTED EXPLANATION OF IHARA'S RESPONSE IN DIET AND ASKED THAT FONOFF TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT ANY SUCH STATEMENTS IN THE FUTURE. FONOFF OFFICIAL MET WITH STA, ATOMIC ENERGY BUREAU DIRECTOR GENERAL, AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL IHARA TO POINT OUT TO HIM UNHELPFUL RAMIFICATIONS OF HIS REMARKS. IHARA CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD MISSPOKEN IN THE DIET, THAT HE HAD BEEN CARELESS IN HIS RESPONSE, AND THAT HE WAS SORRY FOR WHAT HE DONE. FONOFF AND STA NOW ARE WORKING ON A METHOD TO CORRECT IMPRESSION CAUSED BY IHARA'S DIET COMMENT.

3. FONOFF INFORMED POL/MIL COUNSELOR SAME DAY THAT THEY PLANNED TO USE FOLLOWING RESPONSE TO ANY INQUIRIES CONCERNING ABOVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIET EXCHANGE: QUOTE AT THE 14TH MEETING OF THE RADIO RESEARCH AND STUDY COMMISSION, SPONSORED BY THE STA, HELD IN NOVEMBER, 1972, RESULTS OF SAMPLES TAKEN BY STA IN MAY WERE MADE KNOWN. ACCORDING TO THAT ANNOUNCEMENT, 178 PICOCURIES PER KILOGRAM WAS DETECTED FROM SEA SOIL FROM NAHA PORT AND 62 PICOCURIES PER KILOGRAM FROM A CLAM AT WHITE BEACH. THESE FIGURES WERE ACCURATE. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO AN EXPLANATION BY THE STA, WE UNDERSTAND THAT COBALT 60 IS

FOUND ALSO IN RADIOACTIVE FALLOUT IN PORTS WHICH ARE NOT VISITED BY NUCLEAR-POWERED VESSELS. THEREFORE, DETECTION OF COBALT 60 IS NOT RELATED, PER SE, TO CONTAMINATION BY NUCLEAR VESSELS. WE UNDERSTAND, MOREOVER, THAT THE FIGURES RESPECTING COBALT 60 ARE THOUSANDS OF TIMES SMALLER THAN THE PERMISSIBLE FIGURES APPROVED BY THE ICRP. THEREFORE, THE COBALT 60 INVOLVED IN THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS NOT HARMFUL TO THE HUMAN BODY. UNQUOTE POL/MIL COUNSELOR SUGGESTED THAT FONOFF BROADEN ITS EXPLANATION OF CAUSES OF COBALT 60 TO INCLUDE NATURALLY OCCURRING COBALT 60. FONOFF REP UNDER-TOOK TO DO SO. IN CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 27, YAMASHITA TOLD POL/MIL COUNSELOR THAT FONOFF HOPED PERSUADE STA TO USE VARIATION OF TEXT QUOTE ABOVE IN OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO HELP CORRECT IMPROPER IMPRESSION PROVIDED BY IHARA IN DIET INTERPELLATION.

4. DRAWING ON REFTEL EMBASSY HAS DEVELOPED FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE, UNLESS DEPARTMENT HAS OBJECTION, IN CASE INQUIRY DIRECTED TO USE SOURCES BY MEDIA ON THIS SUBJECT:
Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE REPORTS OF 1972 RADIOLOGICAL MONITORING RESULTS FROM OKINAWA WHICH ARE SAID TO HAVE SHOWN HIGH READINGS OF COBALT 60 IN A SAMPLE OF HARBOR BOTTOM SEDIMENT AND A SHELLFISH?

A: WE CANNOT COMMENT ON THE ACCURACY OF THE 1972 OKINAWA REPORTS IN QUESTION SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT METHODS WERE USED TO DETECT SUCH AMOUNTS OF RADIATION. EXTRAORDINARILY CAREFUL AND SENSITIVE MEASUREMENTS WOULD BE REQUIRED, HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO PRODUCE POSITIVE READINGS OF A SENSITIVITY OF ONLY 178 PICOCURIES PER KILOGRAM. SUCH AMOUNTS COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED "ABNORMAL" OR "HIGH". IN FACT, IN THE USG'S OWN LONGSTANDING AND HIGHLY EXPERIENCED SSN HARBOR MONITORING PROGRAM, SUCH AMOUNTS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE FROM 15 TO 40 TIMES TOO SMALL TO BE POSITIVELY DIFFERENTIATED FROM THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NORMALLY OCCURRING BACKGROUND RADIATION, NOT TO MENTION WHATEVER RESIDUE FROM FALLOUT MIGHT BE PRESENT. IN ANY CASE, THE REPORTED AMOUNTS ARE SO MINUSCULE THERE IS NO WAY TO POSITIVELY DETERMINE THEIR SOURCE WHETHER IT BE BACKGROUND RADIATION, FALLOUT OR SSN'S OR SOME COMBINATION OF THESE. FURTHERMORE, SUCH TINY AMOUNTS OF RADIATION CANNOT BE SAID TO REPRESENT ANY DANGER TO HUMAN BEINGS. IN THE CASE OF THE SHELLFISH READING OF APPROXIMATELY 62 PICOCURIES PER KILOGRAM, AN INDIVIDUAL COULD CONTINUOUSLY CONSUME FOOD CONTAINING OVER 100 TIMES THIS CONCENTRATION WITHOUT EX
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